

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00
NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-06
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FM AMCONGEN HONG KONG
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4444
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AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
DEA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 4001

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, HK
SUBJECT: OPIUM--THE STATISTICAL MORASS

REF: BANGKOK 6685

1. SUSPECT IN OUR EFFORTS TO REFINE THE UNREFINEABLE, WE ARE ABOUT TO COMMIT THE FALLACY OF MISPLACED CONCRETENESS. EVEN IN SOPHISTICATED URBAN HONG KONG, WE CANNOT BE SURE OF THE DATA. ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF USERS VARIES BY A FACTOR OF TWO. AVERAGE DOSAGE IS AN EVEN MORE ELUSIVE FIGURE VARYING WITH PRICE AND AVAILABILITY. SOME ADDICTS CLAIM THEY CONSUME WHATEVER HK\$45 PER DAY WILL BUY, WHICH IF TRUE, IMPLIES A DEGREE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE
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TERM "ADDICT."

2. ASSUMPTIONS--WE HAVE ASSUMED A HONG KONG USERS POPULATION OF 100,000, WHICH IS THE FIGURE RELIABLE GOVERNMENT SOURCES USE IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS. PUBLICLY THE HKG QUOTES FIGURES AS LOW AS 60,000, BUT WE SUSPECT THIS IS A DELIBERATE UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE

PROBLEM INTENDED TO IMPRESS THE PUBLIC WITH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DEMAND AND SUPPLY REDUCTION PROGRAMS. WE HAVE ALSO ASSUMED A RATIO OF 10 HEROIN TO 1 OPIUM USER, A GUESSTIMATE BASED ON THE RECORDS OF DRUG TREATMENT CENTERS. THIS RATIO IS PROBABLY SKEWED BY THE FACT THAT THE HEROIN ADDICT IS MORE LIKELY TO SEEK HELP THAN WILL AN OLDER OPIUM USER. WE HAVE ACCEPTED HKG FIGURES ON DOSAGES AGAIN BASED ON ROUGH AVERAGES OF THE SAMPLE THAT COMES TO TREATMENT CENTERS. A DOUBLE ASSUMPTION IS MADE HERE: THAT THE SAMPLE IS REPRESENTATIVE AND THAT THE ADDICTS ARE TELLING THE TRUTH.

3. METHODOLOGY--WE HAVE CONVERTED ALL CONSUMPTION FIGURES TO PROCESSED OPIUM EQUIVALENTS, USING THE RATIO 8 UNITS OF PROCESSED OPIUM MAKES 1 UNIT OF PURE HEROIN. SINCE THE HEROIN SOLD HERE IS NUMBER 3 (30 PERCENT), IT SEEMED REASONABLE TO US AND TO THE HONG KONG POLICE TO DIVIDE THE ESTIMATED HEROIN DOSE BY 3 TO APPROXIMATE THE PURE HEROIN AMOUNT BEFORE MULTIPLYING BY 8 TOGET THE PROCESSED OPIUM EQUIVALENT. ONE OF OUR STAFF QUESTIONS THIS PROCEDURE, ARGUING THAT THE RATIO IS 8 TO 1 REGARDLESS OF THE PURITY OF THE HEROIN PRODUCED. WE HAVE NOT TRIED TO RESOLVE THIS QUESTION BUT INSTEAD HAVE PRODUCED TWO SETS OF FIGURES. WHICH IS "CORRECT" DEPENDS ON WHICH METHOD IS VALID.

4. IN FOLLOWING TWO TABLES, STATISTICS FOR OPIATE CONSUMPTION ARE GIVEN IN PROCESSED OPIUM EQUIVALENTS:
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TABLE A--FIGURES FOR CONSUMPTION BY HEROIN ADDICTS DERIVED BY DIVIDING ADDICTS; CONSUMPTION OF NO. 3 (30 PERCENT PURITY) BY 3, THEN MULTIPLYING BY 8. OPIUM USER CONSUMPTION CALCULATED FROM AVERAGE DOSAGE FIGURES SUPPLIED BY HKG.

	TOTAL ANNUAL CON- SUMPTION (IN METRIC TONS)	PER CAPITA ANNUAL CON- SUMPTION (IN KGS.)	PER CAPITA DAILY CON- SUMPTION (IN GRAM)
90 HEROIN	18.40	.204	.56
10 OPIUM	3.65	.37	1.00
100 TOTAL	22.05	.22	.60

90 HEROIN	18.40	.204	.56
10 OPIUM	3.65	.37	1.00
100 TOTAL	22.05	.22	.60

TABLE B--FIGURES FOR CONSUMPTION OF OPIUM EQUIVALENTS BY HEROIN ADDICTS DERIVED BY MULTIPLYING CONSUMPTION OF NO. 3 (30 PERCENT PURITY) BY 8, ACCORDING TO ALTERNATIVE COMPUTATION EXPLAINED ABOVE.

	TOTAL	PER CAPITA	PER CAPITA
	ANNUAL CON-	ANNUAL CON-	DAILY CON-
CONSUMERS	SUMPTION (IN	SUMPTION	SUMPTION
(IN 000S)	METRIC TONS)	(IN KGS.)	(IN GRAM)

90 HEROIN	52.56	.584	1.6
10 OPIUM	3.65	.365	1.0
100 TOTAL	56.21	TOTAL .56	1.54

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: OPIUM, REPORTS, DRUG CONTROL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 08-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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